TL 4518

Xanana Gusmao's Message Read at Graduate Students Seminar on the East Timor Referendum, Dili.

CNRT - FALINTIL
Greetings message

Dear fellow countrymen of East Timor

Of enormous political relevance is the decision that you have undertaken to organise yourselves into a bulwark for the defence of the interests of the Motherland.

You all belong to the generation of the struggle for National Liberation. You have grown up amidst the tears of mothers and widows, to the sound of bullets that lacerated the bodies of thousands of our brothers and sisters and amidst the cries of pain of so many disappeared young people, in the struggle for Independence.

Your intellectual preparation was instilled in you by the struggle, which had the aim of providing the Motherland with the human resources capable of directing our suffering people to look to a bright future in an independent East Timor.

If the Falintil fighters took upon themselves the honourable mission of defending each millimetre of our land with their lives, on you lies the responsibility of rebuilding each part of the same East Timor.

Twenty-three years of military occupation have destroyed East Timor; they have destroyed our people. Even you could not avoid the colonialist influence.

Today, it is time to think, it is time to work!

Today it is time to probe the dreams, the deepest desires of our heroic people and give them expression. Today, it is time for us to imagine a beautiful scenario - of an East-Timor full of smiles and happiness.

In the sociological area, we have a lot to root out from the hearts of our people, which under the threat of the bayonet, have had to digest a culture and a form of life that does not belong to them.

In the cultural field, we have to start to return to a simple and genuine form of expression of Timorese identity. We must also strive to guarantee our children free education, and educational policies, training policies, and professional training, oriented towards the needs of the nation.

In the area of health, we must look into how to increase the longevity of our people and fight tenaciously against the endemic and epidemic diseases, which are embedded in East Timor. We must be able to guarantee a free basic health care system to the whole population, in particular, to women and children.

In the agricultural field, we have to know the productivity of our soil, the climatic variations and the terrain, in order to encourage diversified and increased production in each region, and so guarantee our people self-sufficiency. We must give priority to the need for food of our

people, by establishing an internal market that provides for the people from one end of the island to the other, and makes them strong and healthy.

With a policy to serve our people, and not to serve individual consumer interests, we will stimulate animal husbandry and fisheries, in order to have easy access to the markets. We will implement small industries by paying attention to our natural resources: manganese, marble, natural gas, and oil among others.

We oppose the building of big, noisy and polluted cities, but will establish small gardens all over East Timor. We oppose the accumulation of power in one city, but will spread small effective centres all over East Timor for study, for planning and the realisation of our dreams.

East Timor has been literally burnt out during the 23 years of military occupation. The bush undergrowth that flourished in 1974 and 1975 is non existent. Water springs have dried up, the trees don't grow and the land has become more arid. There are no more butterflies in East Timor, our beautiful birds have died, and the small animals have disappeared. Every time there is a military operation by ABRI, East Timor is clothed in mourning.

We will need to work hard for the reafforestation of our homeland, and for this, we must plan from now, especially matching the type of flora to each region of our country.

Considering we are a small half island, the environment is of a fundamental importance to the sustenance of our flora and fauna, which we will enrich with our human warmth and the sweat of our people, free and happy.

More technically, we have other fundamental and inseparable aspects of national life, the economy, the finances, the commerce, etc, etc. Civil society will require the formation of NGOs as one of the checks and balances on the politics of the government, and as an expression of the concerns of civil society itself.

This responsibility is passed on to you to begin testing your capacity to serve the nation and people. Our dear East Timor is standing in front of you. It is a canvas which is being passed on to you, to start making the sketches. This joint task of determining the big picture of Maubere and of debating the colours you will give the picture, will make you the true architects for the reconstruction of the country.

Our people are proud of you and are even more proud for having given birth to such valuable children. It is up to you to vindicate this pride.

Motherland or Death!
To Resist is to Win!
Victory is certain and inevitable!
Cipinang, 23 September 1998
The President of CNRT
Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao
Commander of FALINTIL